

VZCZCXRO2090
PP RUEHFK RUEHKSO RUEHNAG RUEHNH
DE RUEHKO #0128/01 0220438
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 220438Z JAN 09
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0160
INFO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEAWJA/USDOJ WASHDC PRIORITY
RULSDMK/USDOT WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCPDOG/USDOC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J5//
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RHHMHBA/COMPACFLT PEARL HARBOR HI
RHMFIUU/HQ PACAF HICKAM AFB HI//CC/PA//
RHMFIUU/USFJ //J5/JO21//
RUYNAAAC/COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA
RUAYJAA/CTF 72
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA 4305
RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 1959
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 5747
RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA 9854
RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO 2518
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 7316
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 3344
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 3364

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 10 TOKYO 000128

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR E, P, EB, EAP/J, EAP/P, EAP/PD, PA;
WHITE HOUSE/NSC/NEC; JUSTICE FOR STU CHEMTOB IN ANTI-TRUST DIVISION;
TREASURY/OASIA/IMI/JAPAN; DEPT PASS USTR/PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE;
SECDEF FOR JCS-J-5/JAPAN,
DASD/ISA/EAPR/JAPAN; DEPT PASS ELECTRONICALLY TO USDA
FAS/ITP FOR SCHROETER; PACOM HONOLULU FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR;
CINCPAC FLT/PA/ COMNAVFORJAPAN/PA.

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [ECON](#) [ELAB](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: JAPANESE MORNING PRESS HIGHLIGHTS 1/22/09

Index:

1) DVD of Obama speeches a great hit in Japan (Sankei)

Defense and security affairs:

- 2) Japan worried that President Obama may ask for Self-Defense Forces dispatch to Afghanistan (Sankei)
- 3) Government to enter talks with countries neighboring Somalia, like Kenya, about handing over pirates captured on the high seas (Nikkei)
- 4) Japanese commercial ships hit by pirates 12 times in 2008, three times directly off the coast of Somalia (Asahi)

Diplomacy toward U.S.:

- 5) Government to send delegation to U.S. as part of effort to strengthen ties with new Obama administration (Yomiuri)
- 6) Prime Minister Aso wants to strengthen the alliance with U.S. but his words are limited to abstract phrases (Mainichi)
- 7) Japan wants an early summit meeting between Aso and Obama in order to push for resolution of the abduction issue with North Korea (Sankei)
- 8) Tokyo is worried that Obama policy toward North Korea will be flexible (Yomiuri)
- 9) Japan, concerned that trade protectionism may rise, seeks pre-G-20 summit meeting (Yomiuri)

Opposition party diplomacy toward U.S.:

- 10) Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) to send delegation to U.S. as part of effort to build "equal relationship" with Obama administration (Mainichi)
- 11) DPJ expects that the launching of the Obama administration will be a tailwind for its "change" of government campaign in Japan

(Yomiuri)

Political agenda:

12) Parallel deliberations in the Diet on the supplementary budget and main budget turning into a war of nerves between the ruling and opposition camps (Nikkei)

13) Former Prime Minister Mori urges former LDP Secretary General Hidenao Nakagawa to leave the Machimura faction over his anti-Aso stance (Asahi)

Articles:

1) Obama speech DVD now on sale

SANKEI (Page 28) (Abridged slightly)
January 22, 2009

DVDs containing Barack Obama's past speeches went on sale in Japan on January 21, the day he was sworn in as the President of the United States. A copy of the DVD titled "Barack Obama," published by Pony Canyon, is now available at a bookstore for 3,150 yen (tax included).

Many businessmen, drawn to the charisma of Obama, who is often referred to as a second John F. Kennedy, picked up copies of the DVD.

President Obama grabbed the hearts of American voters with such catchphrases as "Yes, we can" and "change." The DVD contains Obama's significant campaign speech for presidential candidate John Kerry,

TOKYO 00000128 002 OF 010

delivered in a 2004 Democratic convention, as well as comments by actor Robert De Niro, 65, and other celebrities.

Hideki Sato, 46, a teacher, made this comment at a Kinokuniya bookstore in Shinjuku: "(Obama) uses key words skillfully. I think (the DVD) will help me become a good public speaker."

2) Obama administration might ask Japan to send SDF to Afghanistan

SANKEI (Page 2) (Full)
January 22, 2009

The issues of realignment of U.S. forces in Japan and Afghanistan hold the key to the Japan-U.S. alliance under the new Obama administration. The Defense Ministry, focusing on Robert Gates continuing to be defense secretary in the new administration, anticipates no major change in the U.S. policy stance on these issues over the next six months. Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada hopes to visit the U.S. in May to confirm that the new administration will maintain what the two countries agreed on.

Japan and the U.S. compiled a U.S. forces realignment plan in 2006. But no progress has been made in domestic negotiations on the transfer of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in Ginowan City, Okinawa, to a coastal area of Camp Schwab in Nago City as Okinawa Prefecture has called for moving the construction site further offshore. The plan will run until 2014, but if the completion was delayed, the plan might be called off.

The Democratic Party of Japan, led by President Ichiro Ozawa, has decided to review the Futenma relocation plan, even eyeing a plan to relocate the facility outside the prefecture or the nation, in an attempt to undermine the government's efforts. Prime Minister Taro Aso told reporters yesterday: "There will be no change" in the plan of completing the construction work by 2014. The government hopes to confirm through a visit by the defense minister to the U.S. and on other occasions that there will be no change in the outline of the realignment plan and to work on the U.S. to keep the realignment issue on the right track.

The Obama administration might pressure Japan to make more contributions to help reconstruct Afghanistan. The Department of Defense unofficially requested Japan to dispatch troops to Afghanistan during the previous administration. In addition to his

decision to keep Gates in the post of defense secretary, President Obama has advocated shifting emphasis from Iraq to Afghanistan. Many observers expect the new administration will ask Japan to expand its contributions.

The government intends to play up its eagerness to support Afghanistan by distributing 2 billion dollars in aid, the third largest donor, following Britain and the U.S., as well as by dispatching civilians to the Provisional Reconstruction Team in the public welfare area. But if the U.S. comes up with a request for Japan's cooperation in the international effort to restore civil order in the same way as various countries sending troops, Japan might be under pressure to reconsider a plan to dispatch Self-Defense Force troops to Afghanistan.

3) Gov't to hold talks with Somalia's neighbors on antipiracy measures

TOKYO 00000128 003 OF 010

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
January 22, 2009

The government is planning to send the Maritime Self-Defense Force for maritime security operations against pirates in waters off the eastern African coast of Somalia. In this regard, the government will enter into full-fledged consultations with Somalia's neighbors to turn over arrested pirates to their authorities. The government will have arrested pirates brought to Japan in the case of serious incidents, such as killings involving Japanese nationals. In other cases, however, the government intends to turn over arrested pirates to neighboring countries. Kenya is on the list of countries expected to assume custody of the arrested pirates, and the government is considering entering into an agreement with Kenya on turning over pirates to authorities there.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Taro Aso is expected to order the MSDF this week to be prepared for maritime security operations against pirates under the Self-Defense Forces Law. The government will enter into final coordination over how to handle pirates. Japan Coast Guard sheriffs, vested with judicial authority, will embark on MSDF vessels to arrest and interrogate pirates.

Meanwhile, the ruling coalition's antipiracy project team will meet today and formally decide to send an MSDF squadron for maritime security operations.

4) Twelve pirate attacks on Japan-related commercial ships in 2008

ASAHI (Page 38) (Full)
January 22, 2009

The Land, Infrastructure and Transport Ministry said yesterday there were 12 pirate attacks on Japanese or Japanese-chartered ships in 2008, two more attacks than in the preceding year. There were no injuries, but the cargo was taken in most cases.

Three of those pirate attacks took place in the Gulf of Aden north of Somalia, where damage from piracy has become a serious problem internationally. In April, a Japanese oil tanker, bound for Saudi Arabia with seven Japanese crewmen onboard, was attacked there by pirates. In July and August, two Panamanian ships were also attacked. In both incidents, pirates used weapons to fire on the two ships. Pirate ships chased the two ships, but they zigzagged to escape, the ministry says.

In addition, there were five attacks in waters near Southeast Asia, two attacks near India, and two near Africa, excluding the Gulf of Aden. Japanese crewmen were onboard a tanker when it was attacked in the Gulf of Aden in April.

According to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), there were a total of 293 pirate attacks around the world, an increase of 30 attacks over the preceding year. In the Gulf of Aden, there were as many as 92 attacks, an increase of 79 attacks.

The Gulf of Aden is a crucial sealane for Japanese merchant ships, so the Japanese Shipowners' Association has repeatedly asked the government to take such measures as sending Maritime Self-Defense Force vessels. The government and the ruling parties have plans to send MSDF vessels for maritime security operations under the Self-Defense Forces Law.

TOKYO 00000128 004 OF 010

5) Japan to go all out to build closer ties with U.S.

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
January 22, 2009

Now that the administration of President Obama has been launched, the government is going to do all it can to communicate with the new administration. The government will send a special delegate, Shotaro Yachi, a former administrative vice foreign minister, to the United States as soon as possible. In addition, the government has started coordinating with the U.S. government on holding a foreign ministerial meeting before Prime Minister Aso visits the United States.

Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Kurt Campbell, who is likely to be appointed assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, took part in the negotiations on realigning and reducing U.S. military bases in Okinawa when the Clinton administration was in office. Timothy Geithner, who has been designated to become treasury secretary, once served in Japan. The Japanese government is therefore taking a positive view of these appointments. "They show consideration for relations with Japan," a senior Foreign Ministry official noted.

The government is also planning to refurbish and develop the Japan-U.S. Economic Partnership for Growth, an intergovernmental consultative body on economic issues, into a new framework to discuss environmental issues.

6) Prime minister's intention to strengthen Japan-U.S. alliance too abstract

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)
January 22, 2009

Tamotsu Takatsuka, Ryo Matsuo

In the wake of the launch of the administration of U.S. President Barack Obama, Prime Minister Taro Aso intends to hold a Japan-U.S. summit in March ahead of the second (G-20) financial summit to be held on April 2 in London with the aim of building relations of trust between the two leaders. But the Aso administration's approaches to deadlocked bilateral issues, such as the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan, remain unclear. As seen in the phrase "strengthen the Japan-U.S. alliance," words coming out of the mouth of Prime Minister Aso are all abstract.

"There are not many outstanding issues for Japan-U.S. relations," a Japan-U.S. diplomatic source said. For this reason, a Japan-U.S. summit is not high on Washington's agenda.

Because President Obama places top priority on economic issues, the prime minister intends to strengthen collaboration in the economic area, in which he takes pride. The prime minister showed confidence to the press corps yesterday, saying: "I am now certain that the world's largest and the second largest economies can join hands to move forward." Hit hard by a sudden economic downturn, the recovery of the Japanese economy relies heavily on the revival of U.S. consumption. "Specific measures are not in sight for collaboration," a senior Foreign Ministry official said.

TOKYO 00000128 005 OF 010

As for the U.S. force realignment issue, there are expectations in the Defense Ministry that the approach would change under the new

U.S. administration. Still, the government is caught between affected local areas and the United States, and no change is expected in that picture.

Okinawa is calling for moving the envisaged Futenma Camp Schwab replacement facility offshore, but the government has repeatedly told affected areas, "Making changes is difficult unless there is a logical reason." The two sides remain wide apart. Growing increasingly distrustful of Japan's response, the United States is poised to implement the relocation plan, as was agreed upon.

7) Government ascertaining Obama administration's approach to North Korea, aiming at early Japan-U.S. summit to resolve abduction issue

SANKEI (Page 2) (Excerpts)
January 22, 2009

Following the inauguration of the new U.S. government of President Barack Obama, the government is aiming to set a meeting between Obama and President Taro Aso in March, at the earliest, to have them establish a relation of trust. Chief Cabinet Secretary Takeo Kawamura said: "Japan has proposed to the U.S. holding their first meeting as soon as possible." If the Obama administration assumes a policy of dialogue toward North Korea, the move may open a rift between Japan and the U.S. over the issue of abductions of Japanese nationals by North Korea.

Aso told reporters yesterday: "Both countries have the same perception about the ongoing economic crisis. I have been convinced that the largest and second largest economic powers can work together to contain the crisis." Yet, the government appears not to have ascertained what approach the U.S. might take toward North Korea on the nuclear and abduction issues, both matters of greatest concern for Japan.

A senior Foreign Ministry official indicated that the Obama administration might take an approach that contradicts that of his predecessor George W. Bush, who called North Korea "a rogue nation." The official noted: "Once a new administration comes in, it tends to reject 60 to 70 PERCENT of its predecessor's policies in an attempt to highlight the differences between the two presidencies. Such might occur in policy toward North Korea." Vice President Joseph Biden has advocated a policy of reconciliation with the North. He is said to have backed up conciliatory stance toward the North taken by then Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill when speaking to the Congress," according to a government source.

Another senior ministry official, however, offered a different view: "Many people say that a Democratic Party government would be soft on North Korea, but the party still remembers that the North reneged on the 1994 framework accord reached under the Clinton administration. I do not think the new administration will simply pursue a policy of dialogue."

Before assuming the presidency, Obama gave credit to the agreement reached with North Korea last October on a verification regime that was advantageous to Pyongyang. He said: "This is a step forward toward North Korea's denuclearization." But it remained unknown how the president now evaluates the accord.

TOKYO 00000128 006 OF 010

A senior Liberal Democratic Party member said: "I think Mr. Obama does not know the abduction issue well, unlike Mr. Bush, who had met Sakie Yokota, the mother of an abduction victim. Japan must make efforts to let him know the importance of the issue soon."

8) Obama administration: Government wary of U.S. softening its stance toward North Korea; Hopes to hold summit meeting at early date

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)
January 22, 2009

The Obama administration was inaugurated on January 20 (21st Japan time). Both Japan and the U.S. are geared up to continue to maintain

the present solid state of the alliance. However, there are a number of challenges facing the bilateral relationship.

Commenting on the inauguration ceremony of Barack Obama as the president of the United States, Foreign Minister Nakasone on the 21st told reporters: "An awesome number of people turned out. I would like both of our countries to tackle the many challenges to peace and stability of the world that we face."

President Obama has stressed that he will shift to multilateral cooperation, moving away from the Bush administration's unilateralism. However, some take the view that his basic approach to America's long-standing alliance ties with such countries as Japan would not change but basically continue, according to one Foreign Ministry official.

The Japanese government is paying close attention to the Obama administration's approach to problems that created friction and gulfs between the two countries during the Bush administration, despite its having been termed a "honeymoon-like relationship."

Regarding the issue of Japanese abducted by North Korea, according to a Japan specialist in the U.S. Democratic Party, "The new administration does intend to repeat the same mistake it made when it delisted North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism, causing discord with Japan." There is a growing sense of alarm in Japan that President Obama, who attaches importance to dialogue, will soften Washington's stance toward Pyongyang.

The President plans to call on European countries and other U.S. allies to boost their troop presence in Afghanistan. If Japan continues to avoid a dispatch of the Self-Defense Forces (SDF), Obama might ask Japan to assume a large financial burden, including funding troop presence in Afghanistan.

The prevailing view regarding the plan to realign U.S. forces in Japan that includes the relocation of the Futenma Air Station and the issue of reform of the UN Security Council that includes Japan's bid for a permanent seat is that the Obama administration will continue the previous administration's stances. In such cases, Japan's actions and ideas for finding a breakthrough would be needed.

Commenting on how Japan could make a good start in relations with the Obama administration, one U.S. government source pointed out: "Japan is expected to come up with specific proposals in such areas as dealing with climate change, which is Japan's strong point. In

TOKYO 00000128 007 OF 010

that case, the first bilateral summit meeting would be important."

Prime Minister Aso has expressed a desire for an early visit to the U.S. But with Diet deliberations on the second fiscal 2008 extra budget and the fiscal 2009 budget going on, a government source predicted that Aso's visit to the U.S. would likely be delayed until just prior to the financial summit on April 2.

9) Government hopes for Aso-Obama meeting before G-20; Alarmed about protectionism

YOMIURI (Page 11) (Full)
January 22, 2009

The Japanese government sees the Obama administration, according to a senior Finance Ministry official, as "understanding that cooperation with Japan is crucial for recovery of the U.S. economy, and Washington, too, hopes to deepen its dialogue with Tokyo."

Cooperation between the two governments will be tested at the Group of 20 (G-20) financial summit meeting slated for April. The G-20 members agreed last year to tighten financial regulations, but the countries failed to come up with concrete measures, carrying such over to the next meeting. All eyes are now focused on whether expected achievements can be reached in cooperation with the Obama administration on such areas as the transparency of financial

transactions and strengthening of surveillance of financial institutions. To that end, the government wants to hold a bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Aso and President Obama ahead of the G-20 summit. Shoichi Nakagawa, finance minister and state minister for financial services, stated: "As soon as my counterpart is appointed, I want to meet or talk on the phone with that person." A meeting of the Japanese and U.S. finance ministers on the sidelines of the Group of Seven (G-7) finance ministers and central bank governors will likely a preparatory meeting for the G-20 summit.

However, new U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Ron Kirk, a former Dallas mayor, has little experience in trade negotiations. Assuming that if the U.S. economy fails to get back on a recovery track and the jobless rate goes up, some Japanese government officials are concerned that protectionist moves might appear in the United States. A senior official of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry showed concern by saying, "There would be tougher moves to control imports of foreign products, such as filing complaints of dumping and tightening the trade law."

10) DPJ to hasten approach to Obama administration, with delegation to be sent to U.S. in February seeking to build "equal relationship"

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)
January 22, 2009

Joichi Sato

The major opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) is taking the establishment of the Obama administration as "our great chance to seek an equal partnership" with the United States, as DPJ Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama put it. With a change of government in Japan in mind, the party plans to step up its approach to the Obama administration in order to realize its policies, such as moving the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in Ginowan, Okinawa, out of

TOKYO 00000128 008 OF 010

the prefecture. The party intends to send a delegation to the United States as early as February to have talks with Vice President Joe Biden, Secretary of State-designate Hillary Clinton and other U.S. leaders.

Hatoyama indicated to the press corps in Tokyo yesterday that his party would work upon the Obama administration to relocate Futenma Air Station to a site outside Okinawa. He said: "It is important to come up with an idea to move quickly the air station out of the prefecture. It is necessary to hold talks to reduce the burden on the Okinawa public in the future."

Since immediately after Barack Obama won the presidency, the DPJ has been in contact with persons connected with the new administration behind the scenes.

In December, DPJ leaders exchanged views in Tokyo with former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense Joseph Nye, a leading candidate to become the next ambassador to Japan, and others. Regular talks have also begun through diplomatic channels in Tokyo.

Talks on DPJ policies are certain to face difficulties, such as a revision of the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement and opposition to the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean, in addition to the Futenma issue. A lawmaker with expertise in foreign and security affairs thought the party was trying to pick a fight with the United States with those issues. DPJ President Ichiro Ozawa is willing to visit the United States after this year's Lower House election. The DPJ intends to seek the understanding of the Obama administration toward the party's positions by moving quickly to deepen its ties with it.

11) DPJ hopes to receive boost from inauguration of Obama administration

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)
January 22, 2009

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) Secretary General Hatoyama during a meeting of "The Next Cabinet" expressed his feeling of expatiation that the launching of the Obama administration would give a boost for a change in government in the next Lower House election. He said, "The U.S. has achieved a change in government under a difficult situation. Such thinking here will help bring substantive changes to Japanese politics."

Upper House Diet Policy Committee Chairman Susumu Yanase stressed during a press conference: "A change in government will become a historical necessity this year. I believe the world and Japan will be on the same wavelength."

President Obama will shift foreign policy away from that advocated by the previous administration. Some DPJ members expect this could favorably impact on their party. They believe that because the DPJ has been criticizing the government and the ruling parties on the dispatches of Self-Defense Forces' (SDF) troops to Iraq and the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean, once the withdrawal of U.S. combat troops from Iraq is realized, the party can appeal to the public that their stance was correct. On the agreement to relocate the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station, as well, some DPJ members, according to a senior party official, take the view that the Obama administration might soften its stance on

TOKYO 00000128 009 OF 010

the plan.

In the meantime, with the possibility of DPJ administration in Japan in mind, the U.S. has sounded out President Ozawa about his visiting the U.S. at an early date. But Ozawa turned down the offer, saying, "I would like to visit the U.S. after achieving a victory in the next Lower House election." The DPJ plans to launch efforts to establish a network of contacts with staffers of the Obama administration, by having Hatoyama and other members visit the U.S. shortly, but already, some U.S. officials have voiced concern about Ozawa's stance.

12) War of nerves over simultaneous deliberations on second FY2008 extra budget and FY 2009 budget

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
January 22, 2009

The ruling and opposition parties yesterday clashed over whether to take a vote on Jan. 23 on the second supplementary budget for fiscal 2008, including the controversial 2 trillion yen cash-handout program and related bills. The ruling coalition intends to have four government speeches, including a policy speech by Prime Minister Taro Aso, delivered on Jan. 26 in the House of Representatives, even if the opposition camp does not respond to the vote on the bills in the House of Councillors. The opposition has continued a war of nerves, rebutting the ruling bloc's idea of holding deliberations on the fiscal 2009 budget before the 2008 second extra budget clears the Diet.

In an informal meeting last evening of the Upper House Budget Committee, the ruling camp called for holding a general question-and-answer session today, a precondition for taking a vote tomorrow, but the opposition rejected it. As a result the meeting ended in failure. Three budget-related bills have not been referred to each committee. Seiji Suzuki, chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) Diet Affairs Committee in the Upper House, told his Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) counterpart Susumu Yanase: "We will entrust a timetable for the four government speeches to a decision by the Lower House," insisting that Yanase had agreed to hold the vote on Jan. 23.

The Diet affairs committee chiefs of the LDP and New Komeito, the LDP's coalition partner, discussed on Jan. 21 how they would respond to the matter. The two confirmed that two ruling parties will convey their plan to deliver the four speeches on the 23rd to an informal meeting on the 22nd of the Lower House Steering Committee directors and that even if their proposal is rejected by the opposition, they will take a vote on the 26 without the presence of the opposition bloc. The ruling coalition intends not to hesitate to start

deliberations on the 2009 budget before the passage of the second extra budget.

DPJ Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama, in a meeting yesterday of the 'Next Cabinet', criticized the ruling coalition's idea of holding deliberations on the 2009 budget before the extra budget is adopted, saying: "The ruling coalition is committing a sacrilege against the Diet and neglecting the Upper House." However, if the opposition delays a vote on the second supplementary budget, they could come under criticism from the public. Therefore, there is a view in the DPJ that it would be appropriate to take a vote early next week.

TOKYO 00000128 010 OF 010

13) Former Prime Minister Mori urges Nakagawa to leave Machimura faction

ASAHI (Page 1) (Full)
January 22, 2009

Asked in an interview by the Asahi Shimbun yesterday about Hidenao Nakagawa, former Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) secretary general, who has stepped up criticism of the Aso administration over such issues as the consumption tax hike issue, former Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori criticized Nakagawa, saying: "That's a complete revolt. He should do so after he quits as a leader (of the Machimura faction)." Mori indicated his view that the bonds of collective leadership should be reviewed. He then stressed that Nakagawa should leave the faction if he continues to criticize the Aso administration.

Speaking of Nakagawa's words and actions, Mori said: "I cannot say that he is a leading politician." The faction is led by (former Chief Cabinet Secretary) Nobutaka Machimura, Nakagawa and Shuzen Tanigawa, chairman of the LDP members from the two Diet chambers. Mori said: "The present collective leadership should be reconsidered."

Mori sought to constrain junior and mid-level lawmakers in the LDP who oppose the government's idea of making specific the timing of a hike in the consumption tax in a clause attached to a tax reform bill, arguing:

"That has been approved by the (party's) Policy Research Council and General Affairs Council. They did not say anything at that time. They are putting Mr. Aso in an awkward position. They will tarnish his image."

Mori added: "Under Mr. Aso's leadership, the LDP as a responsible party should fight the (general election). I think the cabinet should be shuffled." He indicated his view that the cabinet should be shuffled after the passage of the budgets and then a snap election should be carried out.

ZUMWALT